2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
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Aden

The most outstanding personality that Aden has ever produced was the late Khan Bahadur Sir Muhammed Abdul Qadar Mackawwi, K.B.E. I came to know him intimately in course of time and to benefit greatly, not only in my early days in Aden, but later when I was Governor, from his wise advice. He was a fine man and a credit to any country, and it was Aden's misfortune that ill health should overtake him just when his wise counsel was most needed. He died in 1953.

The first time that I came in contact with him occurred in this way: One morning I was in my office in the Secretariat and the Resident rang his bell, and as I entered his office he said:

"Here are the nominations to the Port Trust Board which I have discussed with the Chairman. They must go to Bombay for the Governor's approval as soon as possible," and he handed me a file.

"Have you made any alterations, Sir?" I inquired.

"No. The Chairman wants me to drop Mackawwi, he thinks he is on too many committees and that he should have a rest. At least that is what he says, but in fact he finds him an infernal nuisance. No. I am not going to drop Mackawwi; if I did there would be no-one to keep the Chairman up to his work," was the answer I got.

It was later the same morning that Mackawwi came to see me. Tall and almost incredibly thin, with ears even more prominent than my own, he wore a small grey moustache and a tuft of white hair which would have been an imperial if it had only been rather higher up on his chin. He had that quiet dignity of manner which is a characteristic of all well-bred Arabs. He was dressed, as was his normal custom, in a long white cotton gown which reached to his feet, over which he wore a coat of the same material and colour and a waistcoat adorned with a gold watch-chain. His head-dress in winter was an embroidered red woollen turban, and in summer a lighter one of silk surrounding a small, white, knitted cotton cap. On ceremonial occasions and sometimes when it was really cold in the winter, he wore a black overcoat which he had bought in London on the only occasion that he had visited the United Kingdom. Though invariably polite, even when

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annoyed, he was rather a trying visitor because he never spoke above a whisper and was in consequence at the best of times very difficult to hear; in Committees it was often quite impossible to follow what he was saying unless one was seated next to him. His family, as the name implies, came originally from Mecca, but he himself was of mixed blood; one of his grandmothers was a Somali and his mother was of Egyptian descent. His father had been the Settlement engineer, a man of unusual talents who had written two small books, one on Chemistry and the other on Muslim Law; and being a man of remarkable integrity had died with no fortune to leave to his sons. Mackawwi was largely self-educated and started to earn his living as a petition writer and a teacher of Arabic to the Officers of the garrison. Ambitious and restless he turned to trade and began to deal in hides, skins and coffee on borrowed capital. He was fortunate and industrious, and as his business expanded he travelled in the Red Sea area, visiting the Yemen ports, Abyssinia and the Sudan.

In the Sudan he met General Sir Reginald Wingate and Lady Wingate whose brother, General Sir Leslie Rundle, had been a pupil of his as a young officer. Sir Leslie and his sister were the children of Mr. Rundle, the Royal Naval Mate who first planted the Red Ensign on the soil of Aden in 1839 at Sirah Island in Crater. He was promoted to Lieutenant for his courage and leadership on that occasion, and his flag has been framed and now hangs in Government House.

Realising the need in Aden for a good contractor, Mackawwi added building to his other activities. He was so successful in this new venture that by the time I came to know him his trading activities had ceased completely and he devoted his working hours to contracting. His leisure, if it can be so described, was spent in public work and charitable enterprises.

On this our first meeting he came to the point immediately.

"I want to talk to you about the Port Trust Board and the Settlement Committee. There should be more Arabs on them; this is essentially an Arab country and I alone represent my people on the Port Trust," he said, "and on the Settlement Committee there are only two of us."